

BALLET

today



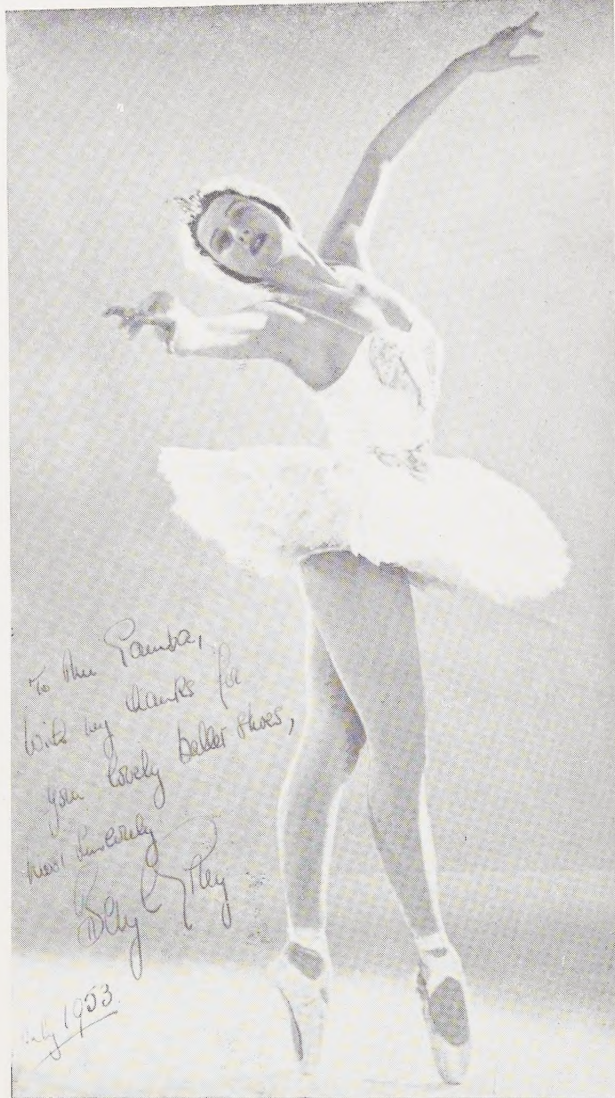
YOUNG BALLET AND OLD AGE
BALLET CRITICISM—on page twelve

MOYRA FRASER

February 1954
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THE NATIONAL DANCE MONTHLY

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Editor: PETER CRAIG-RAYMOND

★ ON THE COVER



TALL elegant Moyra Fraser is Australian by birth. However, she remembers nothing of her native land, for at the age of six months, she came to England with her parents. Although the family actually lived in Surrey, Moyra has always regarded London as her home.

She had no special childhood ambition to become a dancer, but

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Preview..

THE Vic-Wells Association ably hosted a discussion party on the topic of cinedance at the Wells in November. On the panel were Harold Turner, Joan Lawson, Clive Barnes, Derek Knight and A. V. Coton.

Unfortunately the discussion was crippled at birth by having the whole panel and audience speaking about the pictorial recording of classic stage ballet while Derek Knight, the film producer, made some attempt to speak about the nominal subject—dance film.

As Knight remarked at the end, an incredible amount of rubbish was spoken during the evening. The function of producer, film and camera were wholly misunderstood with **THE RED SHOES** again scapegoating easily.

SERIOUSLY

If cinedance is to be considered seriously the people discussing it must understand at least as much of film potential as they do of ballet convention. It is no argument against cinedance that the line of dance is mis-seen by the camera. Line of dance is rubbish to the camera—only line of camera matters. The argument that a dancer's body turns in a trained way towards her audience is irrelevant. A camera is susceptible to how a position fits interestingly inside its frame. As a photographic record these films are useless. But who defined cinedance as a cellulose equivalent of choreographic notation?

Derek Knight, the producer of **BETWEEN TWO WORLDS**, has accepted my invitation to try clearing the air on this subject by elaborating on the cinematic use of dance movement.

He is not writing on stage ballet's syndication of itself on film stock. With that clearly accepted we may see some light on the subject.

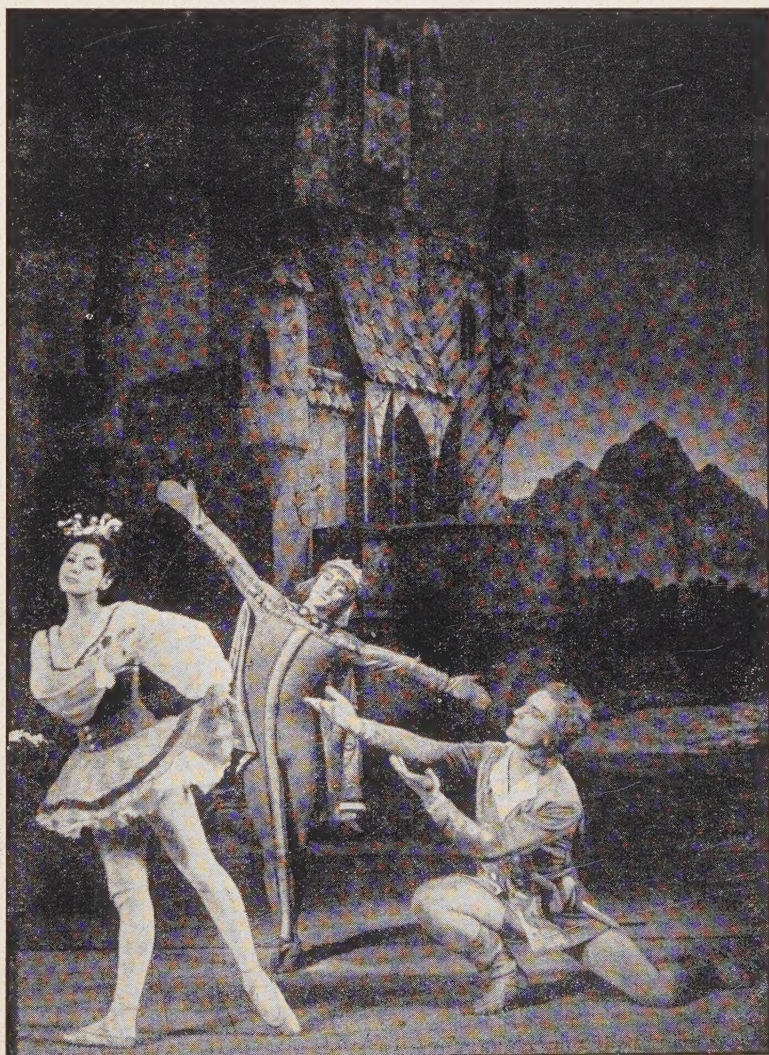
RED INFLUENCE

Reproduced on this page is a

Laszlie photograph of the **WOODEN PRINCE** ballet to Bartok's music, performed at the Opera in Budapest.

With this photograph came a long question from **DANCE LIFE**, a Hungarian ballet magazine. The

writer of an article on ballet in Hungary, Istvan Szenthegyi, takes as his theme the development of the national ballet in Hungary. Nationalism is a reason-endangering principle, in this case very paradoxically so. (To page 10)



THE PRINCE CARVED OF WOOD

© A scene from the **WOODEN PRINCE** ballet staged to Bartok music at the Budapest Opera. (Photo: Varkonyi Laszlo).

BALLET TODAY

AS announced elsewhere in this issue, the March **BALLET TODAY** will be of greatly enlarged page size, although remaining at the same price: 1/-.

The strides forward made by **BALLET TODAY** in the past six months have enabled this enlargement to be an economic possibility and so give dancers and the dance public the best value for the least cost in dance journalism.

More space will be devoted to regular features, such as the digest and other news columns, and new features can now be introduced. The world-spanning news coverage of **BALLET TODAY** can again be widened so that, between our covers, the whole world of theatrical dance will be recorded.

ESSENTIALS

BALLET TODAY has become noted this past year for three essential characteristics: we are unprejudiced by personal inclination, we are broad in approach, we are bright. These characteristics are not, perhaps, perfect in a field notorious for biased, unprofessional conduct, dull padding to ensure a tightness of thought, and a sometime abnormal perspective.

Readers who prefer such things have, no doubt, already given us up. As a matter of fact, exactly fifteen have done so in six months.

In the same time 3,000 new readers have discovered that ballet journalism can be as interesting, clean, bright and expert as normally expected in the other arts and entertainments. Those readers are still with us, and more of them join us with every issue.

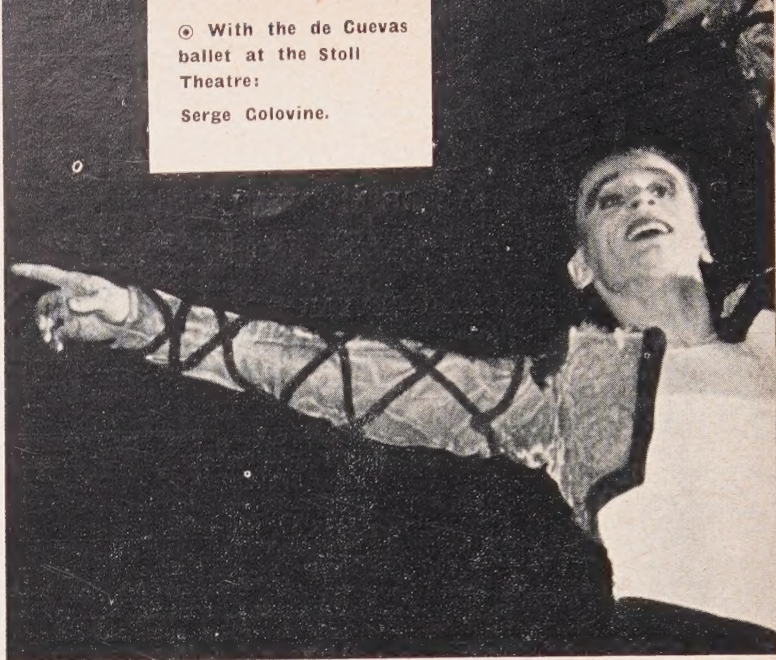
THANK YOU

With March we mean to give a "thank you" to the readers who have applauded our new course, a welcome to our new 3,000 and an incentive to the tens of thousands of normal balletgoers untapped by ballet magazines in the past.

For all of these: the larger, better **NEW BALLET TODAY**. Your suggestions for new features or ideas to make it still better will be appreciated—and activated. And we hope you enjoy our new dress!

★ SEE PAGE 21

© With the de Cuevas
ballet at the Stoll
Theatre:
Serge Colovine.



Mother Hubbard Month

THIS has been a "cupboard bare" month for the recently anointed world home of ballet. Given to apportioning space to equate with worth, it is better to merely say of December that in January we are to see the de Cuevas company.

December returned a tightened **ALICE** to Festival Hall and a near-classic, **THE MERMAID**, to our minds via Rambert and Lime Grove. Apart from this: nothing.

Several months ago, in another connection, a reader wrote to suggest my boycotting bad ballet. This is superficial. To boycott the bad engenders a trend of reasoning which can only ultimate in celibacy, hermitage and the bedraggled existentialism of St. Germain. No: bad ballet should be seen and damned. And which critic knows just when a single performance, a new young dancer—say, will emerge from the tawdry muck one has dutifully forced oneself to go watch?

Certainly not I. But why a quart pot for a pint? So I have reduced

my review space to a pittance and will, if I may, write of what Sibelius epigrammed was talked of solely by artists: money.

The composer, whose generalism I remember long after I have given up trying to 'see' his music (yes, including the second), was rich enough to smugly say that it is the artist who talks brass. Perhaps because it is the artist who finds just this brass most hard to come by!

The recent expose of the charity racket, I use the word thoughtfully, in America lends weight to my tiresome claim that charity for the dancer should above all begin at home.

Over the Christmas season, when the Scrooge in us is communally absent, I was taken to task for my tightfisted thinking. Why should a dancer not dance without fee for charity? But I never said she should not. My only point was that she should dance freely for such causes as drew her desire to give, instinctively.

But a subtle spell has
— To page 20



Ballet in Review

by PETER
CRAIG-RAYMOND



—And now, modern dance

by NICHOLAS
VALENTINE

IN continuation of our survey of ballet schools, this month 'Ballet Tomorrow' has devoted itself mainly to the schools of Modern Ballet and Dance, rather than to those of the Classical.

Many people apparently are still under the illusion that schools which advertise themselves as specialising in 'Modern Dance,' are those that teach a rather complicated form of Ballroom Dance and are in fact glorified Victor Silvesters. This as you will see is most definitely not so.

Our first port of call was on Stella Mann, who holds her large school in Netherhall Gardens in

Hampstead. For many years she danced, taught and was also trained in Vienna, but in 1938 she migrated to Belgium, where she spent the long war years, occasionally teaching and dancing in Brussels, later in Amsterdam in Holland. Then in 1946 she crossed to England, opening her school in London, where she held classes in the Dinely Studios; but in 1949 she put them behind her, setting out for her present home in Hampstead where she now teaches.

Many children attend her classes, where they work to a syllabus of two Ballet and one Modern class per week; she has the

assistance of Olives Goddes, A.R.A.D., to manage the classical aspect of the school, whilst she herself handles the modern; the school has a very good record in the R.A.D. examinations, a high standard having been maintained.

FROM FOUR

Pupils are accepted from the age of four; she has already for the last few years given an annual public performance at the Rudolph Steiner Theatre, where her children have danced such Ballets as THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN, SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARFS, THE CHILD'S DREAM, to Beethoven's, Brahms', Tchaikovsky's music respectively, all to Stella Mann's own choreography.

Descending from Hampstead to the never never regions of Aldgate East, we come to the Toynbee Hall where the School of the British Dance Theatre is held. Their aim is to train those who wish to study Modern Dance, intending to take it up as a stage career.

The school is in the hands of Hettie Loman and Sally Archbutt, both of whom were trained under Laban. The course extends over three years, the students then, if they have reached the requisite standard, are invited to enter their own resident company.

No evening classes are held, neither are children under the age of fifteen admitted to the school. They hold many public performances so prospective students are able to have a chance to see what they would be undertaking; scholarships are awarded to those who possess the necessary talent and qualifications.

SPIRITUALS

The other school of Modern Dance, which we have recently visited was Peggie Rowlands; she holds her classes at the Dinely Studios, where she caters mainly for amateurs and children; she feels she can be of special service to the individual who spends the whole of her day working in an office, so that they would be able to come to her classes, where they would be able to enjoy a form of expressed and creative relaxation. Peggie Rowlands has lectured for the last few years at a large teachers' training college near Chichester, even now she continues teaching in Northampton as well as in London.

She has arranged many of the Negro Spirituals sung by Paul Robeson to dances of her own choreographic design. When Paul Robeson was last in England he saw and was deeply impressed by her performances; he had hoped to hire a theatre for a number of Sunday night shows; but unfortun-

— To page 20



© A Stella Mann pupil
in the ballet
"A CHILD'S DREAM."

Ballet Digest

The "Snubbed" International Ballet Tour . . . The Security

● QUOTE

B.B.C. TELEVISION NEWS: "Leighton Lucas came upon Pugn's score in the British Museum."

MARQUIS DE CUEVAS PROGRAMME: "The music by Pugn was found in the British Museum by Mr. Cyril Beaumont."

PAS DE QUATRE apparently causing rivalry again—as in 1845?

● ANNE GARDON

The French modern dancer, Anne Gardon, with Ernest and Lotte Berk, will appear for the Contemporary Dance Theatre Centre at Toynbee Hall on February 8.

● IN BOURNEMOUTH

At the monthly meeting of the Bournemouth Ballet Club a lecture demonstration of pas-de-deux was given by Beryl Goldwin and Alexander Bennett of Ballet Rambert. A large attendance of members enjoyed the excellent presentation.

● INTERNATIONAL

The end of Mona Inglesby's Arts Council-ignored International Ballet had to come. While tens of

thousands of pounds poured into the rubbish of the rare few companies for which the Arts Council deigned to use public money, the bravely pioneering International was snubbed—time after time.

This is not the first company to suffer from such "taxpayers' trustee" snubbing. That the International Ballet survived so long without home or help is, I believe, one of the most interesting examples of private artistic enterprise winning over bureaucratic preference. That the battle is now, ultimately, lost is perhaps even better than the fairytale ending that long success would have provided.

They lost—but what a success their long survival against odds was in itself!

● MODERN SCHOLARSHIP

The Hilde Holger School of Modern Ballet is awarding six scholarships to gifted students in need of financial help. This will enable the six to complete a two years' modern course at a reduced fee. Girls from 14 to 20, boys from 18 to 24, are eligible, and they should apply for audition details to the Holger School.

The money for these scholarships has been donated by Mr. and Mrs. A. Kuka, Bombay, in memory of their daughter Arnaz, a former Holger student.

● ELG FOR M.G.M.

Tania Elg, one-time de Cuevas and currently Helsinki ballerina,

has been signed to an M.G.M. contract and arrives in Hollywood this month.

● SECURITY MIND

Tanaquil LeClerq, ballerina of the New York City Ballet, and wife of director George Balanchine, is a keen photographer. We asked her why she takes it so seriously. "I may have to go in for it," she replied, "when these legs of mine give out." Tanaquil is exactly 21 years old.

● DANILOVA TOUR

Sol Hurok has signed Alexandra Danilova to a new American tour late this year. The ballet MLLE. FIFI will be re-created for this tour.

● BALLET CONGRESS

The Federation Internationale de Danse is holding a World Congress, exclusively devoted to classical ballet, during October. Organised by FID-President Camille de Rhynal, in Lausanne, the Congress will incorporate an international competition for new dancing, teaching and choreographic talent. Readers interested may like to contact Camille de Rhynal at Villa Camylena, Avenue Dr. Moriez, Nice. Stella Cook is Vice-President and principal of the F.I.D. British Branch.

● IN CHICAGO

Ruth Page is choreographing a new version of the Salome and Herod episode to Richard Strauss' music. It will be presented in Mandel Hall as soon as completed. Miss Page will dance Herodias, Bentley Stone the role of Herod and Barbara Steele the role of Salome.

● MORE SOVIETS

At the Stoll Theatre on January 9 several Soviet students appeared, including Natalie Filippova and Stanislav Vlasov. Both from the Bolshoi, the girl eighteen and Vlasov twenty, their performance was astonishing.

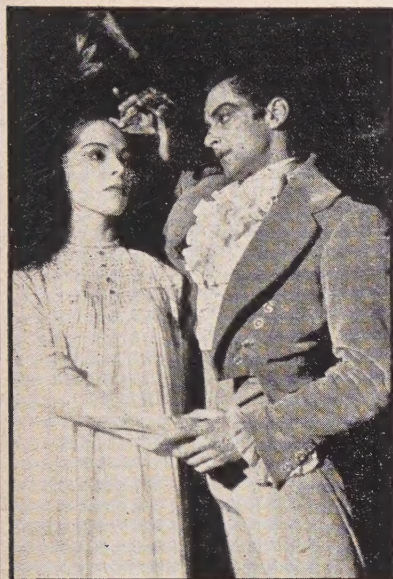
With little grip on melodic or line-conscious technique, Vlasov and Filippova covered their lack with an assortment of holds, leaps and throws which made their appearance rather like a trapeze act sans the trapeze.



© A Paul Wilson shot of Jack Carter's new Cound ballet ADELIN PLUNKETT IN PARIS.

International Ballet Has Closed

London Le Clerq World Ballet Congress



© MARJORIE TALLCHIEF & GEORGE SKIBINE in LA SOMNAMBULA which they will dance in London with de Cuevas.

Dancing to a Melody by Gluck they showed somewhat more restraint and thoughtful dancing, but in the Waltz by Mashovsky and the final Youth Waltz by Dunayevsky, their dancing was scant and their "death defying" tricks all too many. A few: the boy turns his back on the girl and she runs at his back from top left corner, he turns just in time, holds her aloft with her knee on his palm, and then throws her in the air to land flat in his arms . . . he then throws her up again to revolve in the air before coming back to base in his arms.

This is dancing?

● 49 CALLS

Tamara Toumanova danced in thirty-seven South American cities during December-January and, in Rio, had as a bonus above her salary "a piece of real estate."

In the same city she broke theatre records by receiving an ovation lasting through forty-nine curtain calls! She returns—naturally—next month.

● TALK

Klari Szechy, whose exposition of the Nadassy teaching was exclusively introduced in BALLET TODAY, has been invited to demonstrate and talk to the Lon-

don Ballet Circle on February 27. Notes on the lecture will appear in the April BALLET TODAY.

● CHARRAT HERE?

Esteban Cerda, the Chilean dancer who appeared with S.W. Theatre Ballet and Rambert, has now joined Janine Charrat's company in Paris. Rumour has it that Charrat may be seen in London during this summer, probably for Peter Daubeny at the Stoll.

● SOUVENIR

A small souvenir brochure of the Soviet dancers who recently visited Britain has been published at 1/6 by the British Soviet Friendship Society.

This contains a score or so of action shots of Alla Shelest, Konstantin Shatilov, Georgi Farmanantz, Galya Izmailova, and the three Piatnitsky boys.

● IN BOURNEMOUTH

On February 28, at three, Ray Powell of the Sadler's Wells Company will lecture on character dancing to the Bournemouth Ballet Club. The previous evening the club will present an evening of ballet.

● LAST STROKE

The Marquis de Cueva's run of bad luck continued last month when a bulk supply of his company's programmes was confiscated by the Spanish frontier guards.

● FIRST TIME

The first major Japanese dance company to visit the United States, Azuma Kabuki's Dancers, open in New York on February 16. Sol Hurok is presenting this group and a later London season is a possibility.

● LES NOCES

Tatjana Gsovsky, profiled by Eva Bulow in the January BALLET TODAY, has been invited to direct Strawinski's LES NOCES at La Scala, Milan.

● DANCE LITTLE LADY

Maryon Lane, Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet dancer, doubles in several dance sequences of George Minter's DANCE, LITTLE LADY, for star Mai Zetterling.

Also in the film is nineteen-year-old dancer, Christine Lubicz, a lovely new discovery of Minter's.

dancers
in
town

Perky Noel, 21 on Christmas Day, Rossana has announced her engagement to Donald Gorst of Cambridge . . . Winter time is lecture time for the dancing world Mona Inglesby of the late International Ballet lectured the Psysiological Society of Barts. Hospital on the physiological aspect of ballet . . . on January 14th Felicity Gray lectured a 1,000 London school children on ballet . . . critic Clive Barnes recently lectured on THIS BALLET BUSINESS at Esher, Surrey, public library, to an adult audience Raven-haired Marika de Rivera, an Isadora Duncan pupil and star of wartime Paris hopes to follow the free Sunday show sponsored by her wealthy publisher husband Rodney Philips, early in December with a London appearance in February, but her main ambition is to bring her unusual style to a wider public through the medium of television Mary Munro appeared on January 6th in THE MERMAID, a ghost from the Rambert past revived and adapted to television Leslie Caron accompanied by Roland Petit made a brief appearance on T.V. in the last of the series Guess my Story; she was the girl columnist Logan Gourlay most wanted to meet Josephine Gordon was glimpsed as the leading shepherdess in the T.V. version of Menotti's Christmas opera Amal and the Night Visitors, where the rustic dances were arranged by Michel de Lutry There is a possibility that de Lutry and his wife Domini Callaghan may join George Kirsta's Ballet Comique which is at present collecting forces in London ready for a provincial tour early in the New Year.

CINEDANCE AS I SEE IT

By DERRICK KNIGHT

● During November a discussion on cinedance under the auspices of the Vic-Wells Association was relieved by the expert film knowledge—working knowledge—of Derrick Knight. **BALLET TODAY** commissioned him immediately to write freely on the theme of cinedance as he sees it.

FROM the time in the 90's when the first flickering projector flashed onto the screen the tottering arabesque of a music hall *pas de deux*, to the precious resuscitation of Pavlova in **TONIGHT WE SING**, the pious followers of Ballet with a capital B, have raised their fingers in fateful warning, and the mourners have gone around the streets. In many things the fatalists have been right and the mourners did not cry for nothing, but they both acted for the wrong reasons.

What happens when the film and the ballet join hands? There is first of all a division of aims. The film moguls are as afraid of accusations of highbrowism as ballet folk enjoy them. Depending on the mass audience, the film-maker was a first shy of ballet and wanted to condition his public gradually and in small doses. The ballet was built somehow into an improbable plot or thrown in to the film as additional spectacle. The usual result was some sort of unsatisfactory compromise. Clearly little of value can be or could be produced out of this state of mind.

The second great clash has been over the different techniques of staging and film-making. To take an instance, stage-ballet is designed to be seen from one seat in the auditorium. The visual beauty of the ballet's pattern of movement depends on the fluidity of movement of dancers within the discipline of the choreography — and within the orbit of the stage area. The scope of ballet is very seriously limited by these purely mechanical needs.

The film medium, also, depends on visual beauty derived from a pattern of movement, but it is achieved in an altogether different way. The camera has, in theory, the ideal eye. It can not only move from viewpoint to viewpoint in the theatre but (if we are discussing the hypothetical filming of stage-ballet) can get behind the dancers, hide in the wings, get up in the flies or under the floorboards. It can also become a dancer and participate in the dance pattern. It can now even

simulate the third dimension.

The film achieves continuity, and smoothness of action by cutting the material the cameras take, so that the audience perceives no noticeable jerk between different angles of what looks like a continuous action. The film can thus create its own pattern and its own rhythm by editing and camera movement; its challenge, as Balanchine noted in 1933, is 'the exploration of pattern and new angles with infinite possibilities.

But with these things it is clear that the adaptation of stage ballet can hardly avoid resulting in disaster; at best a desecration of a work intended to be seen from one specific side only, at worst a meaningless chaos of detail and irrelevant views and the grimaces of misplaced mime. The sense of topography and of direction is often lost and the onlooker is lost too. The adaptation of two of Massine's stage ballets **GAITE PARISIENNE** and **DANSE ESPAGNOL** demonstrate these pitfalls.

DRAMATIC CONTENT

The dramatic content of a ballet and the development of the plot if there is one, has to be achieved by such devices as mass movement, the placing of individual dancers, entries and exits — all familiar stage usages, and also by symbolic patterns of dancers in line or in depth, by mime and by lighting.

Many of these devices can be appreciated only in part by the person sitting in only one theatre seat at a time.

The films, on the other hand, can greatly enhance the drama content in ballet. The use of different angles not only brings out new possibilities of pattern but can also emphasise at will any particular group or part of the scene. With the aid of the camera it is possible to open ballet up or to pick out significant detail, a limb, a hand. It restores the use of the face as an expressive unit of ballet.

In other words it can give back to ballet much subtlety impossible in the large theatre.

But there are also objections.

The film cannot as yet recreate the atmosphere of a live performance. The film is a dead thing, a fixed record regardless of imperfections. There is nothing to replace the direct response of an audience and, for the dancer at least, the breaking up of the act of creation into small sections for the camera is very destructive of interpretation or even of good performance. But the exploration of ballet in film has barely begun. The examples of recent years have shown some of the possibilities that there are.

The problems have been tackled from several entirely different points of view. The most successful 'popular' use of ballet in the film has been in the American dance-musical. But in these films the ballet is only one element, competing with the songs and the spectacle.

The most important developments in this genre have incorporated the person and either wholly or in part the choreographic ideas of Gene Kelly, a dancer and choreographer who shows that he has a mastery of classical techniques together with complete fluency with tap and other modern dance idioms. There are short and successful dance sequences far advanced from accepted stage conventions, notably in **COVER GIRL**, **ON THE TOWN**, **THE PIRATE** and in **AN AMERICAN IN PARIS**.

But these sequences are not works, they are more like trial runs. Even Kelly has not yet resolved the problem of the ballet film, though the degree of his forthcoming **INVITATION TO THE DANCE** is one of the most exciting speculations of the moment.

RED SHOES

Another and different approach has been made to start from accepted classical techniques, superimposing onto this foundation the increased subtlety and mobility possible with the camera. The first sign that success might be got from this approach was the ballet sequence in **THE RED SHOES**. Here the plot of the ballet was impossible in anything but film: the unities of time and place were ruthlessly destroyed, but without the classical movements of the ballet being disturbed. But there were many failings in this first attempt, the exigencies of the plot for instance, necessitated that the ballet be turned into an imitation stage performance.

This confusion was avoided quite successfully in Powell and Pressburger's second sortie into film-ballet with Frederick Ashton doing the choreography. In the **TALES OF HOFFMAN**, the

To page twenty-one

The Ballerina Chooses Her Shoe

by Pigeon Crowle, with some notes by Beryl Grey

EVER since the first Sylphide rose upon her pointes, the ballet shoe has been one of the chief preoccupations of the dancer, for these fragile satin affairs can make or mar a performance.

Taglioni executed miracles of lightness and dexterity in shoes that were only slightly reinforced or padded with wool, but they soon became soft and and toes were sometimes wrapped in small folds of newspaper. The evolution of the blocked shoe completely revolutionised choreographic art and ballet shoes are now the result of the long years of experience, made by skilled craftsmen who are able to produce a shoe that will give the maximum support to the foot and take account of individual idiosyncrasies.

Every dancer has different requirements. In general, she looks for a firm strong satin that will not split, seams that are not likely to give, and good leather outer-soles that will not buckle. The heel portion must be well cut: that is to say, it must not slant but go straight up the back with a curved-in piece at the top. In particular, the dancer pays special attention to the weight, the type of blocks, and the inner and outer-soles. The satin must be high enough at the back to cover the heel bone.

LOOK FOR

I asked Beryl Grey to tell me what she looks for in her shoes. Beryl's feet are long and slender with well-developed arches, while the most practical foot for ballet is short and broad with little natural arch.

Yet Beryl's pointe work is exceptionally strong and beautiful; her soft, smooth bourées in the second act of *LE LAC DES CYGNES*, or as the Queen of the Willis in *GISELLE*, are instantly called to mind, while the steely staccato arrows of her points in *DONALD OF THE BURTHENS* will not soon be forgotten.

Her shoes are made from her own special last, and she also likes a firm, leather outer-sole, one that will prevent the front of the foot from going over too far. At the same time, the cardboard inner-sole must be light and supple, so that she can feel the ground. This is very important.

Some dancers like two or three layers of inner-sole, and may even

have a fine strip of steel in their shoe, but this is not allowed in the Sadler's Wells Company—the risk of the steel snapping and a broken foot is too great. The sense of direct contact with the ground is essential, Beryl feels, for sensitive, expressive footwork and to preserve a true sense of balance, so for that reason toes must only be lightly blocked and darned. She uses seccotine to prevent the heel from slipping off. Some dancers prefer a little resin mixed with water, but Beryl thinks seccotine or croid is more efficacious; though she admits, ruefully, that it is very hard on tights.

She likes wide ribbons for shoes; not only do they give more support, but are less apt to cut than narrow ones, or cause ugly bulges of flesh at either edge. She may put a thin layer of lamb's wool across her toe joints to protect if they have become rubbed, or when breaking-in a stiff pair of new shoes, but otherwise she never uses wool in her shoes.

NEW SHOES

When her shoes arrive, usually in batches of fourteen, they must be carefully inspected and tried, and usually two pairs in every lot will be returned as not quite right; for each shoe must fit like a glove. Ribbons must then be sewn on and toes darned.

Some shoes are darned by the makers, but most dancers prefer to do this as the shape and thickness of the darn is important and varies with the individual. Darning prolongs the wear of the shoe and gives a better grip.

The shoes are then broken-in at class or rehearsal — few dancers care to wear new ones for performance. A ballerina of Beryl Grey's status will only use a pair twice or, at the most, three times in short ballets. In full lengths she may wear two or three different pairs in an evening—one for each act. The second act of *GISELLE*, for instance, only requires the lightest and softest of shoes; while the first act calls for stouter stuff.

Afterwards, the shoes are finished out in class, some are sent to fans, the rest are burnt. "They make a lovely fire!" said Beryl. And so, in a flicker of golden flame, passes the enchantment of an evening, and the toils and labours of the classroom are resolved into a wisp of white smoke.



● BERYL GREY

ROSARIO, who is Antonio's cousin and former partner, had a brief season of two weeks at the Albeniz Theatre in which she presented a programme of typical Spanish dances, aided by a small but excellent company of twelve.

She is a fine artist with intense feeling and subtlety, and in Roberto Iglesias has a sympathetic partner whose technique is of a high standard. Their "Zorongo Gitano" was outstanding and gave full opportunity for that display of sensuous feeling of which Spaniards have more than their fair

share!

The "Capricho Español" which is a series of dances depicting various scenes in a Spanish village was enchanting.

PERU

The "Huaino" which is an authentic folklore dance of Peru, and danced by Rosario supported by four other dancers, was not only brilliant but humorous.

Rosario's repertoire of Spanish dances is of great value, as she always strives to show the world the true dances of her country and refuses to succumb to the popular craze of introducing classical ballet into the Spanish dance; but it is very sad to think that two great artists like Rosario and Antonio should be dancing apart as they both have so much to give each other, and could, by working together produce a company of Spanish dancers that would be unparalleled in the theatre.

"CONCHITA PIQUER"

There is now a revue running at the Theatre Alvarez Quintero, the greater part of which

consists of Spanish folk dances. Conchita Piquer of course is the main attraction. She is actually a singer who also plays the castanets, but the dances form a background to her songs.

Whilst the various Jotas and Malagueñas are excellently danced by the company, yet the costumes are shoddy and the presentation inartistic, and unfortunately some of the chorus conduct themselves most unprofessionally "on stage," thereby detracting from the beauty of the performance.

ANTONIO

ANTONIO, who has just finished a record season at the Theatre Español, intends, on his return from his tour of Europe and the United States to establish a school of Spanish ballet in Madrid. The writer is not very clear as to what is embodied in "Spanish Ballet," but perhaps when she speaks with Antonio next he will enlighten her!

However, it does seem strange that for a European capital Madrid should be so far "behind" in the classical ballet world. True there are three excellent schools of ballet but certainly no national school, and presentations are few and far between, even though there exists an eager and enthusiastic public; but it is to be hoped that this will soon be remedied.

— from page 3

Preview

The article, purporting to survey the nationalistic trend in Hungarian dance, lists Soviet choreographer after Soviet choreographer . . . Soviet teacher after Soviet teacher. Not a mention of Hungary's own choreographers and teachers, such as Ferenc Nadassy whom Klari Szechy profiled in the December **BALLET TODAY**.

Of course, one expects the ultimate reasoning: ballet must be of the people, for the people. Tractors, not princes. Ingot production, not wili dances. Russia has mastered so many arts — drama, the short story, cinema, ballet — and cul-de-sac-ed them . . . it is tragic that the same political emptiness of thought should now be propagating in the enslaved countries.



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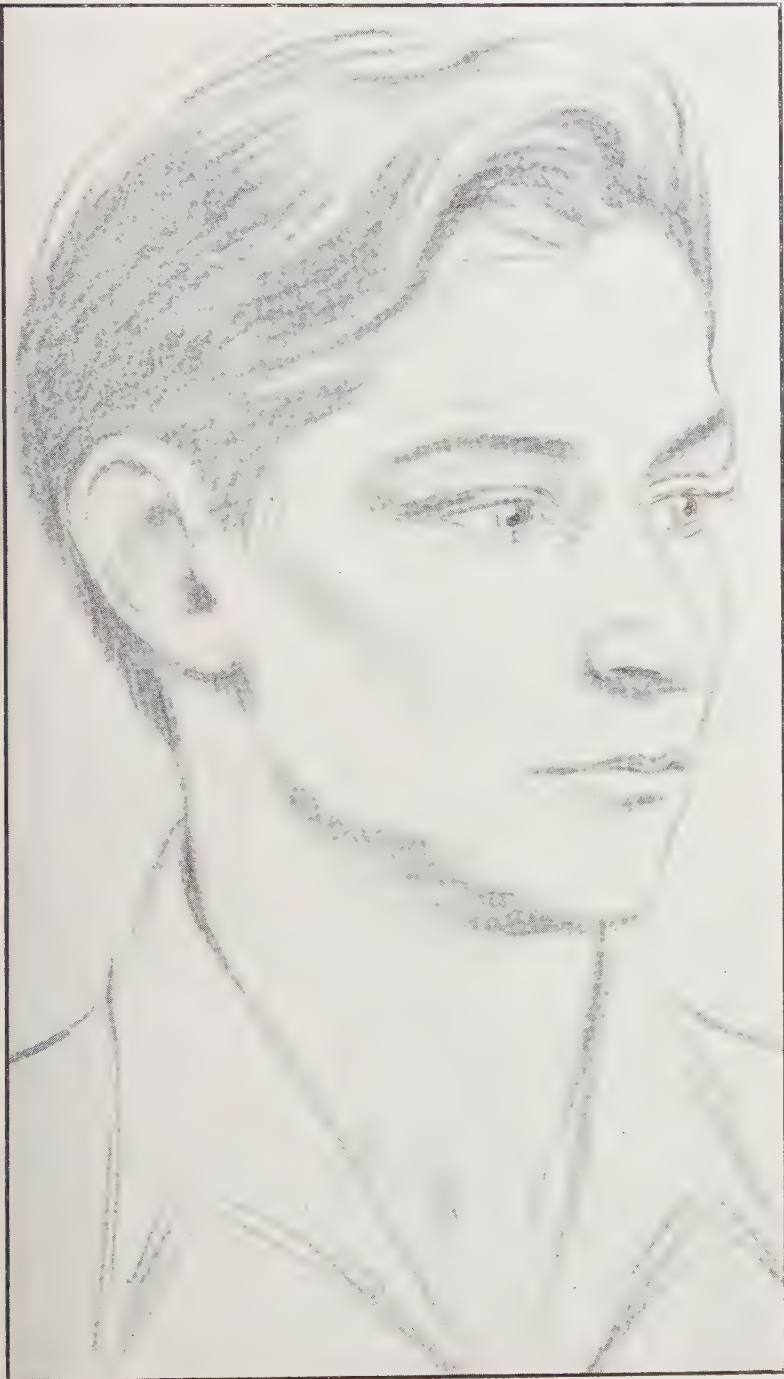
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Portrait by JUNE RYAN

Text by RICHARD AUSTIN

JEAN BABILEE



JEAN Babilée has always appeared slightly ashamed of his genius. He is a great dancer—potentially the greatest of our time—yet he seems bored by his remarkable virtuosity and slightly contemptuous of us when we applaud it.

He will stroll onto an empty stage without having warmed up at all and with his motor cycle chugging away outside to rescue him from an atmosphere he must consider effete, electrify us by a display of dazzling batterie and astonishing elevation, then slouch off again to the thunder of our applause with an expression almost of guilt on his face. It is as if he had picked our pockets in the interval, and, though slightly ashamed, still thought we were a lot of mugs and probably deserved it.

FIRED

But sometimes he is fired by our enthusiasm. At the Princes Theatre in 1948 he danced the much abused *Blue Bird pas de deux* with such voluptuous ease, peeling himself off the stage to float in gorgeous parabolas with a kind of sensual glee, that then he almost convinced us that he took his remarkable talents and the art they serve seriously. But next day he would be terrible: sulking and padding round the stage like a caged animal—caged, perhaps, within a convention he secretly despises. Then suddenly there is a blaze of glorious movement, the applause breaks out—and he turns his back on a lot of morons.

But I have never seen him give a bad performance in one ballet. *Le Jeune Homme et la Mort* seemed to appeal to something deep and rebellious within him. The dances he had to execute were acrobatic, dangerous and violent. At the end of some violent pirouette he would send a chair crashing into the wings, almost as if in his frustration against the formal beauties of the classical dance he was determined to destroy it for ever in this tremendous performance. Now at the Paris Opera he is dancing really badly: the home of fusty tradition cannot be broken up, and, despairing of the attempt, he sulks and meditates revenge upon the elegant princes and gallant partners he is forced to portray. Perhaps he awaits another Cocteau to liberate him.



BALLET perhaps suffers from having had a shorter span of critical regard than the other arts. Paradoxically, instead of bringing out a younger, sparer approach to ballet in its critics, this lack of age has produced several decades of backwardism in dance evaluation. A great many critics have made a career out of memories capital out of condescending comparison with the long-unseen.

The second major problem of ballet criticism is in the closer attachment of many critics with their subjects than is commonly found in the other arts. This is a problem aired recently in several periodicals and newspapers regarding criticism in the theatre. But no satisfactory solution has yet been discovered.

I can do little thinking in print to solve the situation. But the first problem can more honestly be met.

THE UNSEEN

If we accept it that a critic's memories of not easily available comparison are not relative to criticism, the position is cleared. The constant harking-back to legends and unseen examples is ruled out as legitimate, constructive comment. The critic's task must then be redefined as far as ballet goes. He can be one or

several of many things: a plot reteller, a technical analyst, a sounding board of the audience reaction, a guardian of one or more hobbyhorses

In most cases the theatres would wish him a soundboard of audience reaction—especially first-night reaction. In ballet the first night audience is invariably "rigged" by having well-wishers there, or—in any case—politely welcoming. The critic who takes this task upon his one pair of eyes and ear is risking facile one-taste-makes-a-dinner generalization. And the theatres' publicists and advertising agency make the eulogising of audience regard their first job.

As a plot retailer the critic takes the easy way out. Much easier to say the gypsy was seen, as the curtain arose, dancing wildly . . . than to say that Miss Blank danced atrociously or to cite items.

THE OVERLAP

As technical analyst the critic overlaps with the teacher in class. Except by rare chance his technical knowledge will not be as fine as hers and the use of a few catchphrase terms—ballon, beats, and the rest—make for easy quakery rather than thoughtful analysis.

As guardian of pet hobbyhorses

the critic is in safer ground—here he can be honest because he is saying "This is my personal, one-man-one-view opinion." His particular hobbyhorse may be the sanctity of classic tradition, square deal for an audience righteousness, young blood to the fore or any one of a hundred minutiae of critical mulishness. Whichever it is, he is using ballet—quite defensibly—as a private racetrack for personal hobbyhorses.

What can the critic achieve? Or, first, what is this critic who supposedly is bent on achieving?

He is a professional writer, wholly or mainly dependant on writing as a means of living; he is interested in and for the art he discusses over and above the bare minimum of time it demands of him; he can evaluate the work as created on stage rather than balance its end with the available means employed. (That is: he is not kind or given to accepting excuses).

THE AIM

Above all, perhaps, he has an aim outside criticism. He would like to prove himself right—not sit smugly at his typewriter marking the night's entry. Not every critic, or even more than a very few, can achieve this aim—

by
**Peter
Craig-
Raymond**



e Critic Ballet

but perhaps they should nevertheless have it.

The critic, too, should have a broader experience and thinking on the arts and life generally than the performer who is forced to get inside his roles or work. The critic must be able to balance the work achieved not only with the potential achievement and available competitive achievement, but with its site in a broader arts and life sphere. The theatre makes for introspected tight thinking. A critic must counterbalance this by "keeping his head" as to total art and life compatability.

© The critic can be a campaigning force in his art.



© The critic as "ballet-doctor."

Item in point: the praise lavished on Jooss' GREEN TABLE on recent showing came from critics caught in the tight thinking of the theatre. Widescoped critics would have thought out its compatability with current conditions and found it lacking in compatability, and therefore in use.

Given this perfect critic—what is there for him as a serious job in the theatre?

THE CONFIDENCE

As a professional magazine or newspaper writer he must ENTERTAIN his reader first, INFORM of content next, GAUGE theatrical effect, and CLASSIFY the worth of the finished production as a personal reaction. Most important: he must confirm his judgement by stating his thinking and reasons. All this of course is dependant on (a) whether the production under consideration is worth the trouble and (b) whether the publication can allow sufficient space.

If he can be of constructive use—or attempt being so—to the producers and performers; all the better. But it is not a necessity of criticism to be play-doctor, too. Such experts are paid very well for their specialized treatment. The critic is paid by the public

who have no reason to care for the doctoring.

Most of all, I personally think the critic must be confident to the point of conceit. If he has an opinion, a judgement, a conviction . . . he should state it baldly. If he is damned for doing it—that is a risk of trade.

He may be wrong, blind, stupid . . . but being human his audience should realise his fallibility, his hobbyhorses and his personal bias. Most of all they should accept his writing as specific opinion, not general consensus.

THE READER

The reader who picks up John Barber's DAILY EXPRESS column and, ignoring twenty or more other critics, goes through the month saying "The press said . . ." is a dangerous animal. He condemns the critics unread and judges the show on a single opinion.

Can the critic do anything about it? No. Can he do more than state personal impressions and arrive at a personal truth? No.

Is it all worth doing? For those who read aright—not between the lines or through favouritism's spectacles—yes. The critic can be a campaigning, creative force in his art.

NOWHERE is the influence of Pawlowa upon the history of ballet more marked than in the five hundred studios of Japan, where for thirty years the fading memory of the "Immortal Anna" in the minds of teachers was sufficient to sustain classical tradition to the exclusion of native dance lore.

In the repertoire of the Tokyo Ballet Theatre only two works of Japanese origin, THE FLAPPERS (music by Mayuzumi) and KAPPA (music by Yasushi Akutagwa) exist. These are both occidental in character and come from Yokoyama Studio.

The Tokyo Ballet Theatre under the direction of Iwao Takahashi was formed about three months ago, a brave venture, since Ballet Theatre receives no official subsidy being entirely dependent on public support. With this in mind it is hardly surprising that stress is laid on the classics in the ballet blanc manner. SWAN LAKE and LES SYLPHIDES are the most consistently performed works since they occur in the repertoire of every studio in the group. Dancers are drawn from the five leading studios, Hattori-Shimada, Yaoko Kaitani, Yusaku Azuma, Haruki Yokoyama and Momoko Tani. Music is provided by the Tokyo Philharmonic and Symphony orchestras.

KOMAKI

The most famous of the companies

BALLET IN JAPAN

By Sonia Roberts

● *The grand memory of the "Immortal Anna" still has its effect*

outside the Ballet Theatre combine is that of Masahide Komaki. Komaki who has studios in Osaka as well as Tokyo, instructs the five hundred girls of the Takarazuka Musical Comedy Company in classical ballet.

These professional dancers perform on the 90 foot stage of the company's own 4,000 seat theatre and in its film studios. They live in the company's school, where in addition to dancing and singing lessons they receive a free general education of modern high school standard.

The Takarazuka Company would seem to provide the answer to every ballet mother's problem, but it must be remembered that only five hundred girl students are accepted and to be chosen from a population of a hundred million requires both talent and luck.

Despite his connection with the powerful Toho group of theatres, Komaki's first love is ballet of the vivid intensely theatrical type. It is his students who produce the Diaghilev ballets, PRINCE IGOR, PETROUCHKA and SCHEHERAZADE and the infectious frivol

of COPPELIA.

It was to dance with the Komaki company that ballerina Sonia Arova flew to Japan in October, 1952, proving such a success that Japan is now a favourite stamping ground for dancers.

TOUR

The Slavenska-Franklin Ballet of course, with the added attraction of Danilova as guest artist made a successful tour in September. This strong company has had an exceedingly varied repertoire, but the favourite of Japanese audiences was its balletic version of A STREET-CAR NAMED DESIRE.

Paul Szilard, who last year made a lecture tour with Romola Nijinsky, also in Japan, recently with Nora Kaye.

The continued visits of foreign celebrities can only have a good effect on Japanese ballet. But only when the Japanese evolve the delicate blend of their own rich dance heritage with the styles they are learning from Western tutors will they take prominence in the general ballet scene.

—And in ISRAEL

JEROME ROBBINS and Anna Sokolow have returned to New York after preparing plans to 'polish' Israel's Inbal Yeminite Dancers.

Sol Hurok is to tour this Jewish group, under Sara Levi-Tanai, late this year. A London appearance is also possible.

QUITE recently I was given an opportunity to display some of my "dancers" in a showcase on the wall of one of Birmingham's main railway-stations. Little five-inch creatures, with faces of modelled gesso, and whose limbs, made from flex, can take all the correct dance-positions.

At first rather alarmed at the idea of arranging my troupe in such a public place, I found the ordeal not so formidable, when it came to it. Having planned positions, etc., beforehand, I was able to finish before a crowd collected to watch.

My "troupe" was of two distinct types: Spanish Dancers, and Classical Ballet. Because the figures were posed as if in movement, the display-card described them as "Dancers in Action."

HOPES

On one side of the case, against a background of black velvet were the classical ballet dancers, haughty or wistful according to character. The other

Miniature Dancers

—on a Railway Station

By Rosario Hudson



side was occupied by the fiery "Flamencos," inspired by the visiting companies from Spain, whose dancing has enlivened London for the past few years.

The showcase was mine for two months, and I opened the display—my hopes high. But for a fortnight nothing happened, and my hopes fell.

Then, without warning, the whole "Flamenco" troupe was bought by an unknown customer who, so I am told, has installed them on an inset wall-shelf, forming a small stage, glassed over, and electrically lighted.

ADVICE

Soon after, the ballet-figures

found owners, leaving the case so empty, that I had to work very hard indeed to replace them. For each model has an individuality, and cannot be mass-produced, or put together hurriedly.

I made several friends while dusting and rearranging my little show.

Most engaging and helpful were the small engine spotters. These boys would support the heavy glass door while I polished it, giving such advice as: "You ought to 'ave a dog or an 'orse in the winder. THAT ud gettum!"

Taking the venture as a whole, it was both successful and great fun!

de Cuevas

Le Grand Ballet du Marquis de Cuevas, now being presented at the Stoll Theatre by Peter Daubeny, is introduced in this article by Richard Austin.

SINCE the days of Diaghilev, Monte Carlo has become a magic name to the lovers of ballet. But when, immediately after the war, Serge Lifar was presenting his Monte Carlo Ballet in London and the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo was performing in New York, one could not help feeling that the name had ceased to mean very much even to the most nostalgic.

Then in 1947 it was announced that a new company under the imposing title of Marquis de Cuevas' Grand Ballet de Monte Carlo had been formed. This month the Grand Ballet du Marquis de Cuevas (as it is now more suitably called) returns to London on its fourth visit, securely established as one of the major independent companies in contemporary ballet.

Kathleen Gorham, Oleg Sabine.



THE HISTORY

But the history of this important company really began in New York some years before it was formed as the Monte Carlo Ballet.

As early as 1943 the Marquis de Cuevas conceived and sponsored the Ballet Institute as an educational and non-profit making organisation for the advancement of ballet and its allied arts in the United States.

He bought a theatre in New York intended for his troupe, the Ballet International, to which its own school was attached. Eleven ballets by ten choreographers were presented, of which several remain in the repertoire of the present de Cuevas Company. The soloists included André Eglevsky, Marie-Jeanne and Francisco Moncion; among the choreographers were Nijinska, William Dollar and Antonia Cobos, while Salvador Dali was allowed to experiment with his fantastic decorations.

But the Company and the Ballet Institute were unable to survive even after these elaborate preparations — although during 1944 they were certainly non-profit making as was first envisaged! Even with his large private fortune the Marquis de Cuevas could not go on sinking money into it indefinitely.

WITH DE BASIL

When Hurok presented Col. de Basil's Original Ballet Russe in America it was the Marquis de Cuevas who acted as Artistic Director for the 1946/7 season, and was thereby able to preserve some of the works from his Ballet International. In 1947 he was invited to reorganise the Nouveau Ballet de Monte Carlo, and thus the de Cuevas Ballet as we now know it was founded.

The Marquis brought to Europe several ballets from his earlier company and dancers of the quality of Rosella Hightower, Marjorie Tallchief and Eglevsky, while John Taras acted as ballet master.

In September 1947 the Company opened its first tour at the Opera House, Vichy, and has since then become perhaps the most widely travelled company in the world. It has covered some 160,000 miles not only in Europe but as far afield as Egypt and the United States.

The Company first visited Lon-

To page twenty three

Moyra Fraser

at the age of twelve she won a scholarship to the Sadler's Wells School and her career was decided.

She first appeared with the Sadler's Wells Company in the 1937-38 season and soon graduated to the rank of soloist. She was a member of the tour to Holland, when in May 1940 the company became entangled in the onrush of the German armies.

In the flurry, all the scenery, costumes, musical scores and props for the ballets **CHECK-MATE**, **FACADE**, and **RAKE'S PROGRESS** were lost, and the company barely escaped with their lives. This unpleasant experience did not however, deter her from further war time dancing.

The London theatres were closed owing to the blackout, so the company went on tour to the provinces playing in improvised theatres to audiences who had perhaps never before seen ballet.

Such trying conditions might have wrecked the careers of many young dancers, but Moyra Fraser emerged as a soloist of quality and character, one of those who not only kept British ballet alive but extended the range of its audience.

When the company found a London home at the New Theatre, Robert Helpmann created a lively ballet to Respighi music called **THE BIRDS**. In this witty Chinese fairy tale Moyra Fraser starred.

The role of The Hen, a saucy queen of the barnyard who develops a hopeless passion for a dove, gave her a wonderful opportunity to exploit her comedy talents, which also showed themselves in her portrayal of Josephine in Ashton's **WEDDING BOUQUET**.

As a classical soloist Moyra Fraser is remembered for her Lilac Fairy in **SLEEPING PRINCESS** and her Prayer in **COPPELIA**. Her own innate sense of what is good theatre makes her choose **GISELLE** as her favourite classic. Myrtha is her favourite classical role.

After eight years association with Sadler's Wells she broke with them to appear in the London production of **THE SONG OF NORWAY**, a musical comedy based on the life and music of Grieg, taking the role of Adelina which had been played in New York by Danilova.

The part involved speech and song as well as dancing, so from this date elocution and singing lessons became as much part of her daily routine as ballet classes.

She spent a short season with



New Dance Sets

the Covent Garden Opera Ballet where she created a mime role in Arthur Bliss' **THE OLYMPIANS**.

Then followed a period when filming occupied the greater part of her time. She appeared in the colour version of Ivor Novello's **THE DANCING YEARS**, made an instructional film for the Crown Film Unit entitled **THE STEPS OF BALLET**, and — surprisingly for a dancing comedienne — appeared in **MADELAINE**, a grim drama about a Scottish poisoner.

She returned to the London stage for the British musical **GOLDEN CITY** in which the dances were arranged by John Cranko.

Her next appearance was in the Revue **PENNY PLAIN** and she is currently appearing in its sequel, **AIRS ON A SHOESTRING** at the Court.

In her busy life she has found time to be happily married and has a six and a half year old daughter Carol, who has not yet decided on a career, but (like mother) is taking dancing lessons just in case.

For the future Moyra would like to attempt a straight play, but would also like to play in a musical where she would have scope for singing and acting as well as more dancing. She attributes much of her present success both as a dancer and as an actress to the discipline and basic training of a classical dancer.

If for a while she has forsaken ballet as a performer, it is still one of her favourite recreations. Her taste is catholic, but she has a great admiration for the ballets of Roland Petit, particularly his **CARMEN**, and if she does decide to return to ballet it will be with a company where wit, originality and versatility are at a premium.

JEUX D'ENFANTS and **LA JOLIE FILLE DE PERTH SUITE** (Bizet). **SUITE PASTORALE** (Chabrier). Paris Conservatoire Orch. (Lindenberg). Decca LXT 2860.

This record of light and airy charm will find its way into many collections. The two suites are as suitable for ballet as **JEUX D'ENFANTS**, one of Massine's first for the "baby ballerinas" of de Basil's early days—Aveline also used it for the Paris Opera Ballet in 1941. I found Lindenberg sympathetic and I hope you will enjoy the Chabrier suite as much as I did — particularly *Sous Bois* and the staccato passages falling away in the *Scherzo-valse*.

PSYCHE (Franck). *Concertgebouw Orch.* (Beinum). Decca LW 5069.

L'AMOUR ET SON AMOUR was Jean Babilée's first ballet, grafted to Franck's mystic masterpiece so that with the simplest choreography, he followed the limpid and tender music, depicting *Psyché's* love for Eros. The whole tone is that of the Elysian Fields and the fine playing of the orchestra under Beinum, makes this a most attractive disc in all respects.

LE CID—BALLET MUSIC (Massenet). *L.S.O.* (Irving). Decca LW 5047.

The music of Massenet's opera-ballet has always been popular and it was a good choice for Celia Franca's **BAILEMOS** — Let us dance. The score is a Frenchman's idea of Spanish music which Franca followed with pseudo-Spanish steps, though the dances for the Nobles were inspired by the stately Tango. Irving's touch is enjoyable and the recording good.

CORIONLAN & EGMONT OVERTURES (Beethoven) former, *Bamberg Symphony Orch.*, latter, *Berlin Philharmonic Orch.* (Keilberth). Telefunken TM 68002.

Built round Nora Kaye's dramatic abilities, Tudor's pantomimic ballet, **LA GLOIRE**, portrays the psychological repercussions on a great actress, watching a younger star gradually supplanting her. In these overtures and the *Leonora No. 3*, Tudor found music to support his idea of mental tragedy on the grand scale. Keilberth gives a sound reading of both scores but the Egmont gains over the Corionlan with better recording. Both surfaces excellent.

LES PRELUDES (Liszt). *Belgian Radio Symphony Orch.* (André). Telefunken TM 68004.

This Fokine ballet descriptive of the struggle between good and

to page nineteen

The Diaghilev Ballet. By S. L. Grigoriev. Edited and translated by Vera Bowen (Constable 35s.).

After that first meeting with Diaghilev, in the room with the pictures and the open grand piano, when he had agreed to become Diaghilev's régisseur, Grigoriev felt happy and excited. "Our first meeting, his offer to me, and the coming visit to Paris," he said, "had completely changed my life." One turns over more pages to draw forth a facsimile reproduction of the first night programme that had completely changed ballet history. Here are the legendary names, the fabulous productions, and for a moment time stands still.

Modestly, discreetly, but critically, Grigoriev chronicles the twenty years of the company's existence, almost as glorious in its decline as in its meridian. Never failing his responsibilities, he remained like a rock beneath the shifting sands, the cross-currents and storms that beset the ballet. Then, at last, came the change that for years he had longed for—the abandonment of the "cocktail ballet" and the return to the classics and ballets of plot and action. On the last night of the 1929 season, Diaghilev bade farewell to his company assembled on Covent Garden stage. A busy year lay ahead, he told them and—an unprecedented event—they had an uninterrupted series of engagements. He shook hands with everyone—it was for the last time.

Though little is added to our knowledge of the personalities and atmosphere of those years—there needs a Karsavina or Benois to paint that kind of picture—this record is the most complete and faithful we are likely to have. Diaghilev dominates the scene, but the final impression is of the unswerving loyalty and devotion of his régisseur.

The book is marred by the small print and set-out which is more suitable for a text book, and the illustrations are badly reproduced.

The Ballet of the Second Empire, 1858-70. By Ivor Guest (A. and C. Black, 25s.).

In the history of every art there come periods of recession and decline when, for awhile, the creative forces lie dormant before gathering fresh impetus. Such were the last twelve years of the ballet of

the Second Empire. The tide of the Romantic Period was on the ebb taking with it the goddesses of its inspiration: Taglioni, Grisi and Elssler—the Sylphide, Giselle and Florinda. Not until the turn of the century was the full tide to advance, bring the Russian Ballet.

As a result of much research among the vast records of the Paris Opera Library we are now given a detailed and often amusing account of this neglected period. The reason for this neglect is soon apparent. The politics and intrigues, the long-winded ballets with their dancers "en travestie" were centred on baller-

inas of second-rate attainments.

We catch a glimpse of Marius Petipa arriving from Russia to produce a ballet, and the Duchess of Metternich confiscating a whistle by dropping it in her corsage during the tumult attendant on the first night of Tannhäuser, and on the whole the ballet scene interests because of its brilliant, if raffish, setting in the Paris of Gautier and Degas.

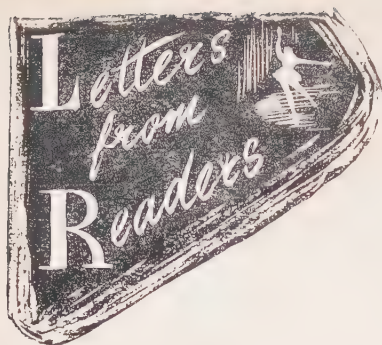
Here and there a wave disturbs the surface of mediocrity. For a moment the tragic figure of Emma Livry, destroyed by fire at the beginning of a career of the most exciting promise, appears in the wake of Taglioni; and COPPELIA

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BOOKS



© A Paul Wilson photograph of Soviet ballerina ALLA SHELEST at Festival Hall.



A CAMPAIGN STARTS

Provincial Tradition?

"Obvious Necessity"

I READ your article entitled "Provincial Tradition," concerning the de-centralisation of ballet, with a great deal of interest. It is surprising, to say the least, to find a London ballet critic writing constructively on this subject.

How International Ballet Died—

IN the next issue of **BALLET TODAY** an exclusive interview with Mona Inglesby and E. G. Derrington, the founders and directors of International Ballet, will appear.

The deliberate death of this company raises more potent point than at first appears. During its lifetime it was repeatedly refused

Arts Council assistance although several hundreds of thousands of pounds were being expended on ballet by the Council.

Readers seriously interested in the physical existence of large-scale ballet in this country should make positive of reading and commenting upon this important feature.

To those members of the profession who ever think seriously on the future of ballet in this country, it must have been obvious, for some time, that some re-organisation will soon be necessary if only to afford employment for the increasing number of technically able dancers who are annually produced by the better provincial dancing schools.

I think that one of the answers to this problem is the formation of small ballet companies in the larger cities, especially as the appetite of provincial audiences has been whetted by recent dance films, T.V. ballet and the rare visits of first class touring companies.

It is this reason that has prompted me to leave London and to attempt to form a small group in Birmingham. This is England's largest provincial city and has always provided a large audience for ballet. (I am well aware that the last touring company to play here for a fortnight did so to bad houses but this was almost certainly attributable to that company's sadly declining standard, which was commented upon by local theatre critics).

I have already been successful in interesting various experienced dancers from such diverse companies as Ballet Rambert, the Australian National Ballet, and the Anglo-Polish company, as well as a number of local designers, etc.

One of the main drawbacks, with which we shall have to contend, and this is usually the case in most provincial centres, is the acute shortage of theatres and halls suitable for professional performances by a local company.

This and other difficulties must face any such group as the one I have in mind, but I do think that a little ingenuity and a great deal of hard work, together with possible help from local bodies, can overcome them satisfactorily. Whether this is so or not, we shall discover within the next few months!

FRANK E. PURSLOW.
100 Springfield Road,
King's Heath, B'ham 14.



BALLET RAMBERT

Feb. 1-6: Theatre, Perth.

Feb. 8-13: Inverness, Forres, Airdrie, Troon, Dumfries.

Feb. 22-27: Royalty, Chester.

Mar. 1-6: New Theatre, Northampton.

SADLER'S WELLS BALLET

at Covent Garden

Feb. 23: SLEEPING BEAUTY (Fonteyn/Somes).

Feb. 24: SLEEPING BEAUTY (Nerina/Rassine).

Feb. 25: SLEEPING BEAUTY (Jackson/Hart).

Feb. 26: SLEEPING BEAUTY (Fonteyn/Somes).

Feb. 27: SLEEPING BEAUTY (Mat.: Jackson/Hart; eveng.: Nerina/Rassine).

March 2: COPPELIA, new production with Nerina.

ANTONIO, at the Stoll Theatre

Antonio (see review on another page) opens at the Stoll on February 22.

SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE BALLET

Feb. 1: Memorial Theatre, Stratford-on-Avon, during the following seven weeks Morecambe, Stockton-on-Tees, Oxford, Wolverhampton, Bradford and Norwich will be visited.

On March 31, at S.W. Theatre, the company will premiere Cranke's THE LADY AND THE FOOL to Verdi pieces. On April 8 the company leave for the South African tour, which opens on the 27th in Johannesburg.

FROM THE BALLET

The Philharmonia Orchestra under George Weldon will play the Scheherazade, Boutique Fantasque and Prince Igor suits and Grieg's Concerto at the Albert Hall, 7.30, on February 28.

is launched upon the waters in the first stage of a long voyage. The picture of the original decor for this ballet serves to show how faithful is the present-day Danish setting. It is one of 77 illustrations that provide an admirable commentary to a superb piece of documentation.

An Anatomy of Ballet. By Fernau Hall (Andrew Melrose, 30s.).

This comprehensive survey is a most useful contribution to the serious study of the history of ballet. The emphasis is on modern ballet from its beginning up to the present day; and the work of dancers, choreographers and companies, their evolution and development, is analysed and considered. Teachers, patrons and im-

presarios are also included, and all those countries where ballet ranks as a major art, including Denmark, Spain, Yugo-Slavia, and India.

The author is clear and concise, making his judgements with much insight and penetration. He is impartial, but his assertion that Nijinski matured considerably after the break with Diaghilev, and that TYL EULENSPIEGEL was a ballet equal to the best period of Diaghilev is open to question. A rather jaundiced outlook which is inclined to give little credit when credit is due and to seize on signs of decay in company or artist, is likely to create alarm and despondency in the reader—but will certainly shake complacency.

© MARJORIE TALLCHIEF with the Marquis of Cuevas Ballet, which is to be seen in London this month, at the Stoll.



The book is well produced with some 85 illustrations and a number of drawings.

Preparation for Ballet. By Nicolaeva-Legat (Gerald Duckworth, 15s.).

Mme. Legat, a Bolshoi ballerina, is the widow of the famous Nicolas Legat, professor of the Perfection Class at the Maryinsky, partner of Kchessinska. After the Revolution she and her husband left Russia, and ultimately opened a school which became the most sought after in London. Dancers from visiting Russian companies went there for lessons and many pupils were eager to study under the old master who was such a meticulous exponent of the Russian tradition and a direct link with its most splendid days. When her husband died Nadine Nicolaeva took over the school. She had been his favourite pupil and had made a close study of his methods, but she included much that was of her own personal experience and theories.

In this book Mme. Legat writes on her system of instruction, with a special section on Yoga the study of which, as applied to breathing and relaxation, she believes to be essential to the dancer. It is surprising that more specialised attention is not given to breath control in ballet. I remember a dancer of my acquaintance who, for reasons unconnected with dancing, had to take lessons in correct breathing. Later, when she was performing in an unusually exacting ballet, it was interesting to note her calm and serene appearance in contrast to the set expressions and heaving breasts of her companions.

The book is illustrated by a number of photographs posed by Mme. Legat's young pupils. P.C.

discs — from page sixteen

evil, light and darkness, was not so overworked as a theme in 1913 when Pavlowa and her company first danced it in simple Greek tunics. We have had many struggles since then, but here, the struggle with the recording, is not too successful. Though the solo instruments come through well, there is a hardness of tone and a lack of clarity with the full orchestra.

ESPANA (Chabrier). R.P.O. (Beecham). Columbia LX 1592.

This is the finale of Petit's BALLABILE and is given here by Beecham and his exceptional orchestra in a manner that is only a little short of perfection. All concerned have been affected, resulting in a fine disc. B.C.

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Mother Hubbard

— from page four

been woven by highly-paid organisers and publicists that all charity is to be supported and the pacifist hand that refuses a shilling to an ex-service trombone player is as mean as Scrooge himself.

Nonsense. This current shamming of the public into giving is psychologically expert, but casts very little credit on the charity. A cause which needs bright lights in the cinema to engender a fear that a neighbour might see one refuse a coin, or tender a paltry one . . . that cause must be scraping bottom.

A few weeks ago I sat in a London cinema and smoked while the lights went up and a slide slid on screen to say that collection boxes were in the foyer. This notwithstanding, the chink and clink of collecting usherettes was all too loud and the girl to whom I refused to give my mite stumbled at my refusal and told me, disarmingly, that "it's a collection, sir." No cause, no appeal . . . just a bald statement of the act of moneytaking. I still refused and she retired thinking me a chain-smoking miser, no doubt!

This ramp of charity, then, affects us all. But the dancer, with a life short enough, is especially affected. So in this Mother Hubbard of a month in ballet I take time out to tell dancers again: if the cause means nothing to say, say no. That will not make you mean, mercenary nor even malapert.

Just honest.

Ballet Tomorrow

— from page five

nately he was forced to return to America, all their plans having to be cancelled.

From one extreme to the other, from Modern Dance we transport ourselves back to the realms of the Russian Classical Ballet; to Anna Lendrum, who holds her classes at the Salle Errard, hidden discreetly behind Oxford Circus, adjoining the Great Marlborough Street Police Court. Anna Lendrum was trained under Nicholas Legat; she herself has been a soloist with the Rambert, International and the De Basil Ballet Companies.

She offers a full and comprehensive ballet training to professionals, students or children. Her school is a comparative newcomer to the ranks of Dance Academies, for it has only been in existence since last March. Her students have recently given their first public performance,

dragonfly sequence and the story in ballet of the doll Olympia contained perhaps the most successful representation of ballet on the screen I have yet seen. The camera was never allowed to obtrude between dancers and audience though the devices of the cinema were used to the full.

These sequences were both exciting visually and, from what I am told, also good ballet.

Another approach which should be mentioned, is the filmic equivalent to the symphonic ballet, the translation of pure music into pure movement. Though this has not yet been done successfully on the screen with dancers, it has been developed in animation by Walt Disney. Beginning with the early "SILLY SYMPHONIES," his most successful work in this field was with the dream sequence in DUMBO and some of the pieces in FANTASIA. But this sort of thing is very far from ballet as normally understood.

Yet another approach is a development from the surrealist ballets which decorated the early 30's. An experiment has recently been made using a constructivist technique in the design of the decor and where the attempt was

made to make the dancer an equal partner with the decor.

This film, BETWEEN TWO WORLDS, was only partly successful because it tried to do too much with too few resources, but it contains much visual enchantment.

This type of film need not content itself in interpreting the music in terms of colour and line, etc., but can attempt a broader and more balanced synthesis of the elements of ballet, pure line, mass, colour movement and music, into an abstract pattern. Because of the complexities of modern art forms in decor and painting and the necessity for this type of film to be made under the absolute control of one man—the artist-creator, it seems that unless a genius can be found whose creativeness extends to all the arts this film form cannot get very far.

FAILED

Stage ballet has so far failed to recapture the former popular appeal of folk dancing, as an amusement and entertainment of the masses. It seems to be held back both by a traditional respect for classicism and by the economic problems of presentation. It now

rests with the film medium and perhaps with television (whose techniques are similar) to canvas the millions instead of the thousands on behalf of ballet. But it can't be ballet as it is known in the theatre.

The true ballet film can go outside into the streets and countryside. Without language problems to face it can cross all frontiers in a flash, but it does not yet do these things freely. The growth of the real ballet film is not going to depend solely on the scrapping of all stage conventions, nor simply on the intelligent use of the camera or of optical trickery.

It needs new inspiration in the form of a choreographer who will forget the stage, or better still has no connection with it, and secondly it needs to develop a new, or new techniques of dancing. Whether this will derive from classicism along lines which Balanchine and his pupils have begun to explore, or whether it will come out of a development of the tap and soft shoe techniques, it is impossible to tell.

For the moment we must be content to watch, be patient with what we have got and applaud the occasional miracle. Who can tell where the future lies?

But there are exciting prospects for the film and the ballet in a new partnership.

The NEW BALLET TODAY



- The next issue, March, is the first of the NEW series of **BALLET TODAY** and is the third major step taken by this magazine in the past year.

Step One was appointing a professional Fleet Street Editor and widely-known dance writer, Peter Craig-Raymond, as Editor.

Step Two was the redesigned page 'look' of the magazine and the contemporary cover design introduced in November.

Step Three is the enlarging of **BALLET TODAY** to give a much greater page size and therefore MORE written material, more news, more features and many more photographs and drawings.

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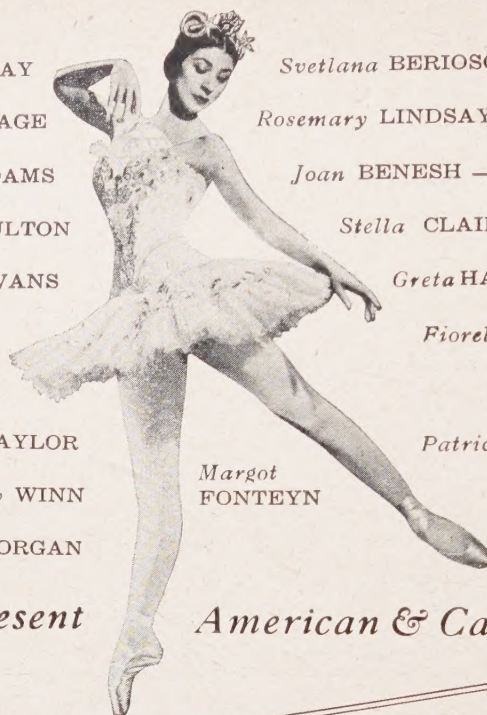
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THE SCHOOL OF

BRITISH DANCE THEATRE

THE New York City Ballet, which has not been seen at its home base since June 14, 1953, returned to the City Center on January 12, 1954, for a ten week season. The company, under the guidance of artistic director, George Balanchine, has been touring first on the West coast of the United States, and then through western Europe.

The Winter Season at the City Center will be highlighted by the premiere performance of the much-heralded first full-length NUTCRACKER ever to be done in this country. The premiere will take place on February 2.

The occasion itself presents a triple "first." It will be the first time that Balanchine has ever created a full-length ballet; the first time the New York City Ballet has ever danced a full-length ballet; and the first time (according to local claims) that an American company has presented

don in 1948 at Covent Garden where we had our first glimpse of the astonishing virtuosity of Rosella Hightower, who has remained principal ballerina ever since. The season was not a great success, even though it introduced younger balletgoers to Nijinska's sardonic LES BICHES and to Balanchine's exquisite NIGHT SHADOW, marvelously danced by George Skibine and Ethery Pagava.

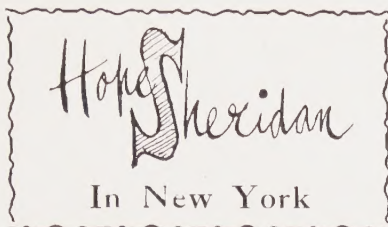
The return visit in 1949 brought a remarkable array of talent among its principal dancers and a no less remarkable disarray among its corps de ballet. Apart from Hightower, Eglevsky and Skibine of the previous visit, we were able to see Massine, Lichine, Tomanova and Riabouchinska. In 1951, on the third visit, this time to the Cambridge Theatre, young Serge Golovine created a sensation by his remarkable ease and virtuosity in the BLUE BIRD pas de deux.

VIRTUOSITY

The Marquis de Cuevas' Ballet is extremely popular in Paris where, in its recent season, it has packed the Empire Theatre. The emphasis is still upon virtuosity which is much appreciated by French audiences, who are ready to applaud a technical feat in a manner somewhat disconcerting to the more cautious London balletgoer, who has been educated by great dancers like Fonteyn and Markova to distrust such pyrotechnics; but even so the French public were quick to appreciate the more subtle artistry of Markova, who appeared as guest artist.

It must be admitted that the repertory is not all of a very high quality, but the Marquis (who has himself contributed the scenario for Skibine's L'ANGE GRIS) has a wide variety of choreographers

A Triple "First" for the New York City Ballet



a full-length ballet.

So be it.

The decor will be by Horace Armistead, Barbara Karinska will design and execute the costumes. Balanchine has used the entire

score of the ballet as it was produced at the Maryinsky in St. Petersburg. Balanchine has re-instated all the cuts in the music which were subsequently made by western European and American ballet companies.

MASS SCENES

The full-length ballet calls for the utilization of extra dancers for the mass scenes, some thirty to forty children for the party and fairy land scenes, and a choir. Balanchine plans to use thirty-five children from the School of American Ballet.

This writer can figure the chorus in the cramped orchestra pit, and maybe a few extra dancers on stage, but where in the name of the City-Center's postage-stamp-size-stage is Mr. Balanchine going to put thirty-five children, extra dancers, and scenery PLUS the New York City Ballet?

We know from company figures that Karinska is designing 140 costumes for the NUTCRACKER (shades of the Bolshoi!) and we are told that Jean Rosenthal (company magician and my nomination for A-1 genius) the company's lighting director, is hard at work not only on the lighting plan but also on the required transformations "which present great difficulties due to the lack of backstage space at the City Center."

This is rather like pulling a full grown Texas rabbit out of an undersized beret without using a shoehorn.

Balanchine made public the casting of the major roles in the forthcoming production. Maria Tallchief will dance the role of the Sugar Plum Fairy and André Eglevsky will be seen as the Prince in the famous pas de deux. Tanquil LeClerq has been assigned the Waltz of the Flowers. Yvonne Mounsey has been cast as the Snowflake Fairy; Francisco Moncion, the Danse Arabe; Roy Tobias, the Mechanical Soldier; Edward Bigelow will appear in two roles: The King of the Mice and Madame Gigone.

THE NUTCRACKER will be given in two acts and three scenes as it was originally done.

It is interesting to note that as a child Balanchine danced the role of the King of the Mice in the Russian version still in the repertoire of the State Ballet.

de Cuevas

—from page fifteen

to call upon. Apart from John Taras, well-known to London for his DESIGN WITH STRINGS presented by the Metropolitan Ballet, and whose latest work, PIEGE DE LUMIERE, although indifferently composed, has the advantage of a most beautiful score by Jean-Michel Damase, the Company carries works by Lichine, Balanchine, Dollar, Anna Richards, Massine and Berger Bartholin among others.

SOLOISTS

But it is in its remarkable array of soloists that the Grand Ballet really makes its impression: Skibine, perhaps the greatest romantic dancer of his generation; Skouratoff, whose superb technique and indifferent stage presence are familiar to London from his days with Roland Petit's company; Hightower, somewhat mannered and cramped in style, but still a remarkable virtuoso; and, above all, Jacqueline Moreau, who has developed since last we saw her with Les Ballets de Champs-Elysees in 1951 into a dancer of magnificent classical style and splendour of movement.

The Grand Ballet du Marquis de Cuevas occupies a position somewhat analogous to our own Festival Ballet with the same faults and merits; but it is a company with its own personality, which is surprising when one considers how it is made up of dancers of several nationalities and diverse traditions, and it has developed far beyond the somewhat shabby troupe that we first saw at Covent Garden in 1948.



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